

Claims

- 5      1. A method for replying a call coming to a communication device in a situation where the user of the communication device can't answer the call him/herself, **characterized** in that in response to the incoming call, the communication device identifies the caller on the basis of an identification information included within the incoming call and sends a reply according to a selection made by the user, or directs the incoming call to another answering service, said reply being one of the following: a voice message, an e-mail message, a facsimile, an SMS message (7) in the form of a character string.  
10      2. A method in accordance with claim 1, **characterized** in that the communication device sends said reply immediately (9) in response to an incoming call.
- 15      3. A method in accordance with claim 1, **characterized** in that in response to an incoming call, the communication device alarms and waits during a certain predefined delay, and if the user during said delay does not answer said call, the communication device sends said reply (10).
- 20      4. A method in accordance with claim 1, **characterized** in that in response to an incoming call, the communication device alarms, and if the user gives a certain key command, the communication device sends said reply (11).
- 25      5. A method in accordance with claim 3 or 4, **characterized** in that the communication device gives a soundless alarm.  
30      6. A method in accordance with any of the claims 2 to 5, **characterized** in that the communication device routes said call additionally to a usual call answering machine (8).
- 35      7. A method in accordance with any of the foregoing claims, **characterized** in that said reply is at least partly formulated based on the identification of the calling party.
- 40      8. A method in accordance with claim 7, **characterized** in that a reply is sent to certain identified calling parties only.
- 45      9. A method in accordance with claim 7 or 8, **characterized** in that the

reply to be sent in response to the incoming call is different according to the respective company said call is coming from.

10. A method in accordance with any of the claims 7 to 9, **characterized** in  
5 that the reply to be sent in response to the incoming call is different according to the respective country said call is coming from.

11. A method in accordance with any of the claims 7 to 10, **characterized** in  
10 that the reply to be sent in response to the incoming call is different according to the respective time zone said call is coming from.

12. A method in accordance with any of the claims 7 to 11, **characterized** in that said identification of the calling party is based on a telephone notebook comprised by the communication device.

15 13. A method in accordance with claim 12, **characterized** in that a piece of information applying to calling party, read from said telephone notebook, is included in said reply.

20 14. A method in accordance with any of the claims 7 to 13, **characterized** in that a reminder to call the identified calling party will be stored into the communication device, in order to be presented to the user later.

25 15. A method in accordance with any of the foregoing claims, **characterized** in that said reply includes time information.

16. A method in accordance with claim 15, **characterized** in that said time information comprises a reference to a certain fixed time by the clock.

30 17. A method in accordance with claim 15, **characterized** in that said time information comprises the length of the time that is left from incoming of the call to a certain fixed time by the clock.

35 18. A method in accordance with any of the claims 15 to 17, **characterized** in that when the user has entered information concerning his/her time schedule into the communication device, the communication device forms said time information automatically by reading from said time schedule information the time when the user will be reachable.

19. A method in accordance with any of the claims 15 to 18, characterized in that when the time until the time expressed by said time information has expired, the function controlling the sending of replies in the communication device in response to an incoming call is automatically disconnected.
20. A communication device (20) for replying an incoming call in a situation where the user of the communication device can't reply the call him/herself, characterized in that it comprises means for identifying the caller on the basis of an identification information included within the incoming call and for sending, according to a selection made by the user, a reply in response to the call, said reply being one of the following: a voice message, an e-mail message, a facsimile, an SMS message (7) in the form of a character string.
- 15 21. A communication device in accordance with claim 20, characterized in that it comprises a real time clock and means for including time information in said voice message, e-mail message, facsimile, or SMS message.
- 20 22. A communication device in accordance with claim 20 or 21, characterized in that it comprises a downwards counting timer for expressing the length of the time that is left from a certain predefined time period, and means for attaching the information expressed by said timer to said voice message, e-mail message, facsimile, or SMS message.